

moved their flocks. Before he reached the place, they saw him coming, and finding him alone, they immediately consulted how they might destroy him. I make no doubt, my young friends, but you are astonished at the wickedness of these brothers; but alas, who knows to what lengths persons will go, when they have hardened their hearts against God! Those who envy their brother, when he is in prosperity, will do more than that when they have it in their power, if the providence of God does not prevent them. But it seems, Reuben, the eldest brother, was not quite so hard hearted as the others, and refused his concurrence in the bloody design. And in order to prevent it from being put into execution, he proposed to let him down into a pit, pretending that he might starve there, and they not imbrue their hands in his blood. Though Reuben's design really was to rescue him, and deliver him to his father. But this project was overruled, for just
after

after they had cast him into the pit, a large company of foreign merchantmen came by, who were ready to purchase slaves; and to these men they agreed to sell poor Joseph: and having stripped him of his coat of many colours, they killed a kid, and daubed it with the blood, and then took it home to their father, and pretended they found that coat in this condition, in the wilderness; from whence it was concluded, that some wild beast had devoured Joseph. But O, how cruel must these men be, who could put their poor old father to so much pain, as such a dreadful account of his son's end must occasion! It would have been no wonder if good Jacob had broken his aged heart. Learn then, ye children, to value the happiness of your parents, and let not your conduct wound their spirits.

CHAP.